



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Payette  
National  
Forest

800 W Lakeside Ave  
McCall ID 83638-3602  
208-634-0700

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File Code: 1570

Date: January 3, 2013

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN  
RECEIPT REQUESTED

Drs. Karen Balch and Olin Balch  
P. O. Box 344  
Cascade, ID 38611

Dear Drs. Karen and Olin Balch:

In accordance with 36 CFR 215.18, I have reviewed the appeal record, Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (EA, DN/FONSI) for the Golden Meadows Exploration project on the Payette National Forest. My review focused on the project documentation and the issues raised in the appeal you filed. In reviewing your appeal, I have considered the recommendations of the Appeal Reviewing Officer regarding the disposition of your appeal. A copy of that recommendation is enclosed.

#### **APPEAL DECISION**

After careful consideration of the above factors and review of the project documentation provided, I am reversing the decision by Krassel District Ranger Anthony Botello. My decision is based on review of all the appeals and the project record. I find that the activities documented in the EA, DN/FONSI, and the project record are generally consistent with agency policy and the Payette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. However, I have determined that additional information about closed well drilling systems is needed to verify the conclusions in the analysis.

My decision constitutes the final administrative determination of the Department of Agriculture [36 CFR 215.18(c)].

Sincerely,

*/s/ Keith B. Lannom*  
KEITH B. LANNOM  
Appeal Deciding Officer

Enclosure

cc: Anthony B Botello





**File Code:** 1570-1

**Date:**

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Reviewing Officer Recommendation, Golden Meadows Exploration Project,  
#13-04-12-0005 A215

**To:** Appeal Deciding Officer

This is my recommendation on disposition of the appeal filed by Drs. Karen Balch and Olin Balch, protesting the Golden Meadows Exploration Project Decision Notice signed by Anthony Botello, District Ranger on the Krassel District of the Payette National Forest.

The District Ranger's decision authorizes the drilling of 178 holes (cores) on 139 drill pads in 26 drilling areas; construction of approximately 120 sumps; construction of up to 0.3 miles of temporary road; authorizes the re-opening and expansion of existing borrow source; the drilling of a redundant water well, pipe installation to transport water to private land and the construction of a well house; and the transportation of fuel along Forest Service routes for purposes of exploration of the proposed Golden Meadow project in the Stibnite area of the Payette National Forest, which is located within the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River watershed.

My review was conducted pursuant to, and in accordance with, 36 CFR 215.19 to ensure the analysis and decision is in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policy, and orders. The appeal record, including the appellant's objections and recommended changes, has been thoroughly reviewed. Although I have not listed each specific issue, I have considered all the issues raised in the appeals.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

I have reviewed the record for the project addressed above. I recommend the District Ranger's decision be reversed because additional information about closed well drilling systems is needed to verify the conclusions in the analysis.

Rowdy Muir  
Appeal Reviewing Officer

